




the **connection**

SUMMER 2015

Inside: Introduction to Board of Directors



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We Care Board of Directors

Anyone who makes a donation to a nonprofit organization, whether it is giving of time, sharing of finances, investing through prayers or contributing in some other way, likes to know that his gift is used wisely. We Care Program operates under the oversight of a Board of Directors who provide leadership and accountability so that our donors can be confident the sacrifice they make will be used to help in furthering the purpose of Proclaiming Christ and Discipling Inmates.

The Board of Directors is made up of men from all around the country who have a heart for the ministry of We Care. A recent quarterly meeting provided an occasion to gather some information that might help you learn to know them just a bit better. Following is a brief introduction to each of our current board members.



Marv Fisher is the pastor of Calvary Chapel in Farmville, VA, and also works as a drywall contractor. He and his wife Sherri have been married for 25 years and have seven children and one grandchild. Marv enjoys playing softball and hunting when he can. Having been involved

with We Care for 12 years, he sees his service on the Board of Directors as “God’s will for this season of life.” Marv supports “the vision and mission of We Care to bring the hope of the gospel inside prison walls.”



Alvin Landis, from Harleysville, PA, is the owner of Landis Graphics. He has been married to Dawn for 22 years; they have five children. Ministry involvements include family, home fellowship church leader, witnessing at work, and local prison ministry. Fishing and hunting

provide relaxation for him. Alvin’s association with We Care spans 17 years. His twofold reason for serving on the Board is “because I believe God has called me to it and because I have a strong belief in what We Care is about.”



Sherwin Wenger is the owner of Wenger’s Construction in Lancaster, PA. He and Carol have been married for 24 years and have three sons, whom he sees as his current primary ministry. High on Sherwin’s hobby list is hunting and fishing. He has been associated

with We Care for 15 years. Because of having both in-prison ministry experience and business experience, Sherwin sees his service on the Board as “an opportunity to provide leadership in both aspects.”



John Yoder lives in Wagener, SC, where he serves as the director of Carolina Chaplaincy Program and is the owner of Aiken Backyard Collections, which sells outdoor lawn furniture. He and his wife Twila have been married for 25 years and have three children. Ministry involvements

include prison ministry and serving as a deacon. His hobby is hunting. John’s affiliation with We Care spans 21 years. He enjoys being a part of We Care and says “I love to help with the workings of this organization.”



Durell Orendorf and his wife Carolyn live in Accident, MD, where he works as project manager at a construction firm. They have been married for 17 years and have four children. Durell serves as a youth leader and is active in local prison outreach. His hobby of music is

also used in ministry through his involvement in a men’s quartet. It was this ministry which first connected him with We Care 12 years ago. Durell says he serves on the Board of Directors “because God called me to it.”



Dennis Nolt lives in Ephrata, PA. Married to Linda for 32 years, Dennis works as a forklift operator at a building supply business. He and Linda have three children and two grandchildren. He has been associated with We Care for 37 years and is involved in prison ministry in

his home area as well. He also serves as a small group leader. Dennis finds relaxation and enjoyment watching football and reading. He says, “I serve on the We Care Board of Directors because I love the ministry.”



Loren Wissmann leads his family in sharing Christ through music, testimony, and teaching and preaching the Word. He has been married to Gloria for 34 years. They have 13 children and 4 grandchildren. Home is in Milford, NE. When not traveling for their music and teaching ministry, work includes installing irrigation systems, sandblasting, painting, and installing spray-on roofing systems. Besides being a ministry, music is also a recreational interest for Loren. Involved with We Care for ten years, his desire through serving on the Board is that he will “be able to sow back into this ministry which has been a great blessing in my family’s life.”



Aaron Martin is an auctioneer from Ephrata, PA. He and Vera have been married for 41 years and have three children and ten grandchildren. A hobby he enjoys is treasure hunting. One way Aaron reaches out in ministry is through his involvement in the lives of several struggling individuals. He has been associated with We Care for 34 years. He commented, “We Care prison ministry had a large impact on my life while serving there in the 1980’s. I feel serving on the Board is just a small way I can contribute something back into the ministry.”



Richard Graber is from Hutchinson, KS, and works as a residential foundation contractor. He has been married to Wilma for 35 years. They have four children and eight grandchildren. Richard has been associated with We Care for 13 years, including volunteering in prison and around headquarters for a few months in each of the past two winters. He is helping to develop Prairie Lighthouse, a reentry program in his home area. One of Richard’s hobbies is playing with old McCormick farm equipment. Richard says he serves on the Board of Directors because he enjoys “being a part of a well-organized ministry that is serving ‘the least of these.’”



Lester Huber lives in Atmore, AL, not far from our headquarters. He and his wife Goldie are soon to be celebrating their 49th anniversary. They have three children (one is deceased) and six grandchildren. Lester works as a cabinet builder and carpenter; even his hobby is woodworking. He finds joy in mentoring men in prison and following up with them after their release. He has been involved with We Care for 13 years. Regarding his service on the Board, Lester says, “I want to do what I can to provide input to help the cause of prison ministry.”

I, Don, am very thankful for our Board of Directors. Serving under the Board for the past 11 years as Vice President and now this year as President, I have witnessed firsthand the level of commitment and passion these men (as well as those who preceded them) have displayed. Their care and concern covers all aspects of the ministry. They want to make sure the Word is being proclaimed in the prisons. They want to know that the gifts we receive are used in the best way possible. It is their desire to see our staff grow in healthy ways and not get burned out and discouraged. The board members wrestle with the heavy issues, but they also love to have a good time as they lead together.

You probably noticed one thing these men have in common is a history of involvement with We Care. The average length of time is nearly 18½ years. For some that simply means one week a year during ReNew Hope; for others it includes a period of full time service. Regardless of exactly how each one has been involved, all of these men care deeply about reaching inmates for Christ.

I trust this brief glimpse behind the scenes enables you to feel a bit better acquainted with the godly men who are giving of their time, energy and talents to serve in leading We Care Program.

– Written and compiled
by Don Metzler and Noreen Horst



Softball Outreach

June 4 - 6



The eighth annual We Care Softball Outreach was a blessed event. Numerous prayers were answered regarding this outreach, and we share here some of the specific answers.

Obtaining permission from the prisons and coordinating the game times were more challenging this year than usual, but in the end all of the teams were able to play during their scheduled time slots.

In spite of the initial weather forecast which called for 70 – 80% chance of rain each day, we ended up with beautiful sunshine. Only a few sprinkles of rain fell at one location during the entire time. The weather was actually nicer than it has been the last few years.

Even when one of the teams experienced a vehicle breakdown, the prison they were headed to worked with us, allowing the team to enter a couple hours behind schedule and stay later so that they could play a full game. According to the men in the van, the way details worked out to get the vehicle fixed was definitely a “God thing.”

God gave Marla Zook, the hostess at the headquarters, extra grace and strength for the responsibility of hosting and feeding 50+ men even when her husband Benjamin was sick.

“Mound ministry” is an important part of the Softball Outreach, especially because some of the guys we meet on the ball field don’t spend much

time in the chapel, and the volunteers have this opportunity to speak truth into their lives. Others are believers who are blessed and encouraged through the sharing by the volunteers and the time

of praying together. In one camp an inmate who because of timidity refused to lead in prayer one day apologized to fellow inmates and our staff person who had asked him and willingly led out in prayer during mound ministry the following day. Another of our staff persons mentioned being blessed to hear men request prayer not only for their families on the “outside,” but also for their fellow inmates who weren’t living right.

There is no doubt God was at work on behalf of and during the 2015 Softball Outreach. Without prayer all our efforts are in vain, so we deeply appreciate everyone who prayed for this avenue of ministry.

We are also very thankful for each one who participated and/or helped to make it possible. We want to specifically thank the following businesses for their sponsorships toward the costs of the event: Ebersole Spreading ; Grady County Farm Bureau; Large Car Polishing;

Martin Water Conditioning; Precision Door; Robert H Ranck, Inc; Wenger’s Construction.

We trust that the actions demonstrated and the words spoken will continue to minister to the “brothers in white” for a long time to come.



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

James Smoker, Recruitment Director



In Matthew 9:37 we read, “the harvest is great...” Any believer who spends any amount of time inside a prison will soon see that so many inmates are in need of a Savior. Many with broken lives are searching for answers to their problems. So extreme is the pain and so tight is the grip of sin that they don't know which way to turn. It is in those times

when God can work the best.

Right now there are state chaplains asking for help in this field that is ripe to harvest. Approximately 32,000 men and women are incarcerated in Alabama, and the Department of Corrections gives We Care Program the freedom to labor inside the prisons. What a blessing to have state officials who recognize the need

and who ask for assistance in this area.

Thankfully, God is the One in charge of the harvest and He is the One who will organize the workers. I am encouraged to see the Lord of the Harvest continue to call individuals into prison ministry, and I am thrilled when I can contact a state chaplain and let him know someone is interested in assisting him.

Recently Dale Brubaker moved from Virginia to Alabama to take on the role of assistant chaplain at Draper Correctional. Last year both the warden and state chaplain were asking We Care, “Where are we on the list for receiving assistance?” We are thankful Dale has joined the We Care team and are grateful for his willingness to fill this need at Draper.

“So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into His fields.” (Matthew 9:38, NLT) Keep praying for this field of ministry to incarcerated men and women. May we continue to labor for the glory of God!



Intern Update



Tiffani



Ellie



Ben

On May 8, 2015, three young people completed eight months as Discover interns. Their energy and passion for God blessed all whose lives they touched during their term. Ellie Copenhaver is now pursuing other avenues of service to God in her home area. We wish you God's rich blessings, Ellie. After a 2½-week break in their home communities, Tiffani Heisey and Ben Nolt returned to We Care. Tiffani

has committed herself to three additional months in Alabama, splitting her time between serving at Montgomery Women's Facility, the Thrift Stores, and our headquarters. Ben plans to stay for two years working part time as an assistant to the Thrift Store Director and part time as a chaplain at Fountain Correctional Facility. We are grateful to have both of these young people around for a while longer.

Attention Young Adults!

The next Discover term begins September 14, 2015. **Application deadline is July 31.** To receive an application call 251-368-8818 or email discover@wecareprogram.org.



It meant so much to the inmate players at Holman, and it was a blessing to me to see all the players really understand the games as ministry. The sacrifice of the free-world players meant a lot to all of us. It was good, real good!
– Chaplain Chris Summers

NEWS

NEW CHAPLAIN



Dale Brubaker

Dale Brubaker recently joined the We Care team as assistant chaplain at Draper Correctional Facility in Montgomery, Alabama. Dale moved to Alabama from Harrisonburg, Virginia, where he worked in retail as a floor covering salesman and also managed apartments for several years.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Keira Joy Neighbors

Former bookkeeper Hannah Neighbors terminated her time with We Care on April 20, 2015, and on April 30 she and her husband Chris welcomed their first child, Keira Joy, into their home. Though we miss Hannah, we rejoice with them over their precious little blessing from God.

ORDINATION



Frank Gossett

Chaplain Frank Gossett was ordained for prison ministry on April 12, 2015, under the authority of Atmore First Assembly of God. Frank has been a chaplain with We Care Program for two years and serves at Holman Correctional Facility teaching classes, ministering one on one, and leading services.



Kevin, Renee, Autumn, Kylie, Tyson, and Jenna Kennell

WELCOME, KENNELLS!

On May 25, 2015, Kevin Kennell stepped into the position of Business and Outreach Director. Kevin, Renee, and their four children came to We Care from Camilla, Georgia, where they were part of Meigs Mennonite Church. In his new role, Kevin will serve as business manager and will oversee and coordinate various events such as ReNew Hope and Softball Outreach. We welcome Kevin to the leadership team.

From the Field

Stories and Testimonies from We Care Chaplains

David R. Landis

Atmore Work Center
Atmore, AL



He walked into my office as if he were ready to make a declaration. “Chap, something has to change. I can’t keep living like this anymore!”

“Mario” went on to detail his daily struggle with the rampant spice drug. “I have to stop using this stuff, Chap. It’s ruining my life!” Yes, it was ruining his life, and the lives of many others.

We spent some time together talking about what it would look like to start over. Turn the battle over to God... begin to read the Bible...surround yourself with fellow believers...take in the Christian classes and services that are offered.

“In fact,” I said, “we are just starting the Gospel-Centered Life class tonight. Would you like to jump in?”

He heartily committed. I prayed with Mario as he recommitted his life to following Christ. Now the real test would begin—one day at a time.

“Would you like to join me for a game of Scrabble?” I asked.

We have played just about every day since.

Anna Miller

Montgomery Women’s Facility
Montgomery, AL



“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” (Psalm 1:1, 2) Our interns, Ellie Copenhaver and Tiffani Heisey, challenged the ladies with a party if they memorized six verses of scripture. They thought maybe around 20 ladies would respond. But word spread about the party, and 61 women succeeded in learning the required number of verses!

The party was approved for Ellie’s last day there. In the meantime, the lady who had shared a special activity idea with the interns had a real struggle memorizing her verses. I gave her a Psalm and suggested she sing it. Not

until a friend helped her was she able to eventually get it. We rejoiced over her victory and looked forward to the evening when the ladies could enjoy a snack and painting their fingernails. At the party the ladies gave back with praise dancing and some large farewell cards they had made for Ellie.

Pray along with us that the scriptures recited will take root in the hearts of these women. Pray that they will see the two ways of life described in Psalm 1 and understand that the choices they make today will lead either to a life of fruitfulness or to a life of ruin.

Irvin Martin

Century Corr. Institution
Century, FL



“Chaplain, you don’t know what we’re up against until you’ve been in our shoes. Can you fill these shoes?” he proclaimed, as he proceeded to kick off his shoes and push them towards me. Jack, along with about 20 others in the Pre-Release class, commenced to snickering. Some laughed outright.

I had been lecturing them on the importance of completing prison aftercare programs, relating to a mentor or pastor, and attending church. They, but for a few, had literally scorned and laughed at the whole idea. I was frustrated, and the class came to a close. As I walked away, humbled and feeling inadequate to teach any longer, the Holy Spirit birthed in me a new desire to really try to help these guys. Seeing the desperation in Jack’s eyes had brought tears to mine. Can I really make a difference?

The following week I went equipped with contact and reference information for halfway house programs in major Florida cities. Many in the class were apologetic for their disruptive manners earlier and showed much appreciation for the information I had gleaned.

The class continues, however, to be quite challenging. The typical response of many inmates is to blame society’s discriminations and the state’s incarceration system, saying they are never really given a fair chance. Although it is important to face the reality of a less than welcoming society they are returning to, I am constantly trying to steer them away from negative moaning about things they cannot change to take responsibility for what they can change. By God’s grace, we can make a difference.



THE BIGGER PICTURE

A MESSAGE FROM DON METZLER, PRESIDENT

don@wecareprogram.org

Imagine for a moment you are a wheel on a car. Wouldn't it be easy to simply focus on going around and around?

What if you were the battery and all you ever did was provide an electrical charge whenever you were nudged to do so by the switch, which in turn is controlled by the key? Or if you were a floor mat, you might be discouraged because every time you get cleaned up, someone always puts their dirty feet on you again.

Prison ministry can at times also feel rather repetitious and mundane. Especially for those who seldom go inside prison walls, it can be easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. Still, in order for the ministry to operate effectively, every role is necessary. Just like the parts of a car all work together to move the vehicle and its occupants from point A to point B, so all of us here at We Care and all of you partnering with us through prayer and finances are working together to accomplish the goal of Proclaiming Christ and Discipling Inmates.

While we sometimes see only the tasks at hand, story nuggets shared by other team members encourage us and remind us of the bigger picture. For example, I recently heard of a service where seven inmates came to Christ. News from Chaplain Bob Depew informed us of an inmate requesting baptism, and we found out Chaplain David S. Landis recently baptized three men at still another prison. "Mario" recognized his need for change and recommitted his life to Christ, and 61 women accepted a challenge to memorize scripture (see *From the Field* inside). Such stories remind us that opening mail, paying bills, scheduling training events and performing other routine tasks, along with your praying and sending donations, really do help to point inmates to Christ.

May you, in whatever situation you find yourself today, be able to see the bigger picture of what God is doing in and through your life. I trust you will not feel like a wheel just going around and around but that you will keep in mind that yes, by God's grace, you are helping to make an eternal difference!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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